Christian Courier

A REFORMED WEEKLY, formerly known as Calvinist Contact

JANUARY 7,1994/49th year of publication/No. 2382

Giving food to the starving tricky with politics, village customs

'It's easy to become cynical,' says food monitor in Malawi

Irene Bom

LILONGWE, Malawi — It happened just as site workers began to hand out food in a village in Malawi early last year.

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) staff were just starting to distribute the nine kilogram bags of yellow maize to those villagers whom they had rated as most needy on a previous round.

Suddenly a man stopped the handouts and started speaking loudly to the waiting crowd. He was the district party chair for the Malawi Congress Party —at that time the only legal party— and he proclaimed that the president had bought the grain from abroad for his people.

The incident was one of many that shows what can happen when Western food aid gets tangled in the web of national politics.

For one of the program's coordinators and one of the distribution monitors, both fairly new to relief work, the six-month program served as a crash course in the subject.

"Relief and development can be big business for governments. It's easy to become cynical," says Michael Ott, 24. A current master's student in oceanography at the University of Victoria in B.C., Ott signed up as a field monitor while on a hiking trip through East Africa.

Says CRWRC program coordinator John Gunnison, who was transferred after budget cuts from a Christian Reformed World Missions post in Mali: "I never dreamed it would be so hard to get food to hungry people."

Harvests failed

CRWRC organized its first-ever Malawi distribution program from December 1992 to May 1993, together with Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief (CPAR), after harvests in that country failed. They were left with the politically volatile area around the capital city of Lilongwe after other agencies decided to focus on smaller and more manageable regions further south, according to Gunnison.

The project reported only a one or two per cent grain loss and was rated by the drought relief coordination unit (a subcommittee of the council of non-governmental organizations) as "one of the most successful" non-governmental food aid programs in Malawi, according to Brian Hoeniger, CPAR program officer for Africa.

CRWRC staff say it was anything but easy to achieve that.

The political atmosphere during the program was charged by the upcoming referendum, initially scheduled for March 1993, and held in the summer, in which citizens protested President Banda's longstanding single-party system.

The president, seen by many as a benevolent dictator, used every means — including international relief — to drum up popularity.

"Government favoritism was much more blatant than I expected," says Gunnison.

See **RATION** *–p.2...*

Chinese explore Christianity in U.S.

PHOTO: ROBERT VANDERVENNEN

Inside the Three Self Patriotic Movement Church in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China. This "denomination" is the only officially-approved church in China.

Robert VanderVennen and Marian Van Til

A high-ranking delegation of government officials from the Peoples Republic of China recently completed a tour of 13 American cities where they investigated the influence of churches and Christianity in the United States.

"They came specifically to study church-state relations and the impact that churches and other religious groups have on our society," says Rev. Ned Graham, son of evangelist Billy Graham and president of East Gates International, the host agency.

Seattle-based East Gates describes itself as "a ministry with a three-fold purpose of building bridges, networking and equipping." Working together, East Gates and the China Christian Council, led by Rev. Han Wenzao, hope to help "usher in a new era of reconciliation between China's official Protestant church (the Three Self Patriotic Movement) and house church Christians.

Wenzao notes that churches in China "live in a much different situation from those in America." But he believes "we have much to learn from each other" and that this trip by

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Abraham Kuyper on facing a new year...p.11

Keep your appointment with April.....p.15

Thinkbit

Why dread 1994? Jesus Christ is the January and the December!

Bert Witvoet

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News

Ration system bewilders villagers

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To get the job done relief workers had to walk a tightrope between party representatives, the local site workers they hired who were often educated and frequently favored a multi-party system, and traditional village and district chiefs.

In two instances, the team got a phone call from the president's office telling them to deliver food to two villages with party supporters that were not on their list of most needy.

"It was a real dilemma," says Gunnison.

"We didn't want to play into their hands — that would have discredited our agency. But if we had said no, our program would have been stopped."

In the end the United Nations' World Food Program, in charge of food aid imports, gave the team extra grain so that they could feed those two villages without having to bypass more needy ones.

Party officials also threatened truck drivers if they would not follow government routes in their distribution.

"It would have been much easier if we could have had our own trucks," notes Gunnison. Their contract, however, directed the funds toward food.

Staff also caught site workers collecting ration cards and village families swapping kids in order to get more food.

"It would have helped if we had known the language," says Ott.

Gunnison notes that the two Malawi women hired as distribution monitors "really knew what was going on." Another North American monitor who had taken Chichewa language training was also able to be more useful, although Gunnison notes that "there was still a certain distance; he was still a foreigner."

Would share

Western rating methods caused other difficulties, staff found.

"Sometimes we would return to a village and find that the single mother to whom we'd given food had shared it with other families," says Ott.

"They didn't understand why we didn't just give food to the whole village for them to divide themselves."

While at times recipients may have been forced to share, more often sharing came out of a "different mentality," says Ott, adding that Malawis "just seemed to share a lot."

Gunnison said that a single mother giving food to a wealthier father-in-law, for example, was "inappropriate" and "made things very difficult," even though it was "not a one-way street" and the needy would eventually receive back. Yet he later also warned against "Westerners with good intentions trying to impose Western solutions."

"In the end I kind of felt like we were giving food to the hungry and sooner or later the hungry would get to eat it," Gunnison sums up.

China delegates attend Graham crusade

PHOTO:ROBERT VANDERVENNEN

Worshippers at the church enjoy fellowship after a worship service.

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Chinese officials "has been an important step in that direction."

The two agencies are also co-operating in a joint project to distribute Bibles among China's house churches.

A view without 'sugar-coating'

The delegation from China held discussions in Washington, D. C., with political leaders. They also visited a Salvation Army centre in Harlem, New York, attended a Billy Graham crusade in Columbus, Ohio, went to a chapel service sponsored by Prison Fellowship in a Maryland state penitentiary, and attended several church services. The tour ended by observing church-based social action projects in the Watts district of Los Angeles. The delegation also met with former presidents Nixon and Bush.

Ned Graham asserts that as the group's host, East Gate wanted to show them a cross-section of American religious life without "sugar-coating their view."

The majority of the Chinese delegates were government officials who are responsible for carrying out their country's official policy toward religious life and groups. Upon their return home the delegates were to report their observations "to the highest levels of authority at the Central Committee of the Communist Party and in the government," says Graham.

As China moves toward greater societal openness, the government says it is working out a policy of greater religious freedom. China has some 1.2 billion people, a tiny minority of whom are Christians.

The Chinese officials admitted they were impressed with the way churches and Christian groups they saw are helping to resolve social problems.

Mennonites move from relief to peace work

Irene Bom, with files from the *Mennonite Reporter*.

WINNIPEG — "Most often there is not so much a shortage of food as a shortage of peace," says Ron Bietz, who directs donations of food and clothing for the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

And that's why Christian agencies have to work as hard at resolving conflicts as they do at food production and distribution. "It isn't easy, but it's part of the process," he says.

MCC was started in the 1920s to provide food aid, and last year exported seven million dollars worth of food from Canada. But lately MCC has been dipping more and more into mediation and peace issues as well. More co-operation with local churches and partner agencies means that out of the agency's approximately 400 overseas workers, none work directly with food and material aid distribution. About 10 overseas personnel are now involved in such "causal" work.

That trend sparked discussion at MCC's annual meeting in Calgary two months ago.

"I am essentially looking for a sense of where MCC is going.... It's a question of whether the commodity and the money match for a faithful response," said John Wiens, B.C. representative.

John Redekop, political scientist at Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo, Ont., had concerns about the trend.

"If we are moving from focusing mainly on relief, which deals with symptoms, to dealing with causes of the problems of the two-thirds world, then we're dealing with economic and political issues to a significant degree," he pointed out.

"Does our mandate authorize us to deal with the basic political and economic issues which are often at the root of these problems?" asked Redekop.

"I believe that if we are dealing with causality rather than symptoms we are moving ahead of the constituency. Have we adequately thought through the implications?"

MCC executive director John Lapp did not see a change from the agency's historical mandate, noting that "peace has always been at the heart of the agenda."

In an interview after the discussion Redekop urged, "Let us be aware of the fact that we are moving more and more into the political arena."

Wiens added that "if we are going away from relief...towards peace and reconciliation and justice issues, and if this is where our money is going to be placed, then I feel more information has to be given to the constituency so that in fact there is financial support and, perhaps even more important, the moral support necessary."

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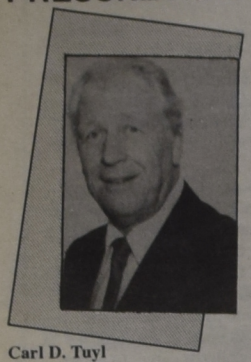

Carl D. Tuyl

Happy New Year! May sorrow pass you by, pain flee your body and laughter fill your house. We were all silenced for a few moments by the deafening sound of passing time, but now it's back to business as usual. Get out of your post-mall syndrome. There is a wonderfully sweet honeymoon going on. *Numero Uno* yanks our U.S. ambassador out of Washington and sends his nephew to that posting. Not a ripple anywhere. Everybody saying how deserving the nephew really is.

Then the prime minister goes somewhere south and is "out of the loop," leaving the deputy minister in charge. Not a ripple anywhere. We are admonished to remember his surgery, and doesn't he deserve a vacation? And didn't he put Monsieur's super-deluxe $56.5 million airbus up for sale? And to top it all off, there was an all-out love-in bash with the premiers in Ottawa. One of the premiers, Ontario's own cerebral socialist, even remarked that the Ottawa meeting was characterized by the absence of bovine excrement. Any more of this praise and the Pope will have to short-list *Numero Uno* for sainthood. His infrastructure $6 billion booster shot will start as soon as February.

★ ★ ★

There is a strange disharmony in our economy: while governments pursue job creation, a major objective in the private sector is job elimination. Maybe the two will cancel each other out. In the meantime the GATT negotiations concluded with something that slightly resembled an agreement. The result was a 550-page document that will keep a whole army of lawyers in business for the next century fishing for loopholes in regulations that cover French butter, American movies, European airplanes and Canadian marketing boards.

★ ★ ★

There was a really cute performance in the East, where a Mr. Donald Kerr, an official of the St. John Shipbuilding Co., announced that Canada's new patrol frigates would be finished $4000 million below budget. This was such an extraordinary happening that it gave Saint Nick hiccups that went all the way from the North Pole to Patagonia. The St. John board of directors, aghast at the idea of saving the government money at their company's expense, quickly pink-slipped Mr. Kerr.

★ ★ ★

In these billion-dollar configurations even a first-year student in accounting can do tricks with numbers that change financial pictures faster than a hungry teenager can finish off a hamburger. Witness our own national deficit that, in the twinkling of the eye of the finance minister, went from $32 billion to $46 billion. These figures are as baffling as the division of seats in the newly elected Russian Parliament. It's all done with mirrors, folks. Do we really know how much a billion dollars is? In loonies, stacked side by side, it would stretch from Ottawa to Vancouver, across the Pacific Ocean, on across Russia and the Atlantic, back to Ottawa and then as far West as to Calgary, with money left for coffee and apple pie.

★ ★ ★

Let's look Westward now: Alberta, having one of the most secretive governments in the country, would become the most open under the freedom-of-information law proposed by a committee of the provincial legislature. Politicians and bureaucrats would be able to keep secrets only if they could prove that harm would be done by making the information public.

★ ★ ★

We have two losers of the week. The first one is the guy who stole gasoline by siphoning it from a truck in Peterborough, Ont. He struck a match to see how much gas was in his car. Whoomph! Two trucks destroyed and a car scorched. The thief walked away unharmed. Our second loser of the week is the chairperson and chief executive of the Royal Bank, who received no Christmas bonus this year. His hurt might be somewhat alleviated by the fact that he did make a fair bit over one million dollars.

★ ★ ★

Environment Canada officials believe they recorded the world's tallest wave off the northern tip of Vancouver Island. The wave, 30.8 metres high, was recorded by a weather buoy tethered 100 km offshore. The previous record was 26 metres, measured in the Atlantic on Dec. 30, 1972.

★ ★ ★

GATT has already toppled one government. The South Korean prime minister and his entire cabinet resigned, apologizing for the government's failure to protect a ban on rice imports.

★ ★ ★

Boris Yeltsin is saddled with a nasty piece of politics in the form of this Zhirinovsky fellow, who sounds like a real bona fide, high-octane, racist nut. Racists in South Africa's Orange Free State declared their province independent in order to continue apartheid policies. There are nuts all over this planet!

★ ★ ★

Talks between Israel and the PLO are deadlocked in arguments about border control.

★ ★ ★

And this was heard recently on an answering machine: "If you want to talk to me, please hang up and write me a letter."

★ ★ ★

For readers planning to buy an automobile in 1994 I pass on this item from the *Ottawa Citizen*, which mentions that the Acura Integra built in 1990-1992 has been rated the most popular used car for 1994 by the Canadian Automobile Association. My very own 1981 Chevette wasn't even mentioned.

★ ★ ★

And then there is Erika T. Love out there in Vancouver. Erika paid $2,000 a month for part of a revolving billboard that displays her picture, a post office box number and the words "Fine arts graduate seeks wealthy husband." I don't have the office box number, but any of the readers interested could get it from the *Montreal Gazette*; or fly out to Vancouver!

Carl Tuyl is chaplaincy co-ordinator in Canada for the Christian Reformed Church and is a member of the Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care.

Christian Courier

(ISSN 1192-3415) Published weekly on Fridays except for June 3, July 8, 29, Aug. 5, 12, Sept 16, Oct. 21 and Dec. 30 by Calvinist Contact Publishing Limited. Member of Canadian Church Press and Evangelical Press Association.

Canada mail: Publications Mail Registration No. 0451. Postage paid at St. Catharines, Ont. Postmaster: send address changes to Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, Ont. L2W 1A1.

U.S. mail: Christian Courier (USPS 518-090). Second-class postage paid at Lewiston, NY. Postmaster: send address changes to Christian Courier, Box 110, Lewiston, NY 14092.

Subscriptions:	**Canada** (GST incl.)	**U.S.A.** (GST free)
six months	$22.25	$18.00 U.S.
one year	$39.50	$32.00 U.S.
two years	$74.00	$60.00 U.S.
three years	$111.00	$90.00 U.S.
overseas one year	$125.00 airmail $ 70.00 surface mail	

Advertising deadlines: display advertising: Wednesday, 8:30 a.m.; classified advertising: Thursday, 8:30 a.m. All deadlines are for the following week's issue. See classified pages for more detail.

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Editorial

Should we celebrate Epiphany?

My oldest brother asked me what "Epiphany" meant. I didn't have a very good answer for him. All I knew was that it had something to do with the adoration of the magi and that it represented a period in the church calendar.

My ignorance is understandable in a way, because the Reformed churches discarded Epiphany, along with all other church feasts. They saw in them an accomodation with the world or the Roman Catholic Church. Reformed church leaders argued that every day is a day of the Lord.

So the 1574 Synod of Dordt decided, for example, that Reformed people should be warned against celebrating Christmas as a feast day. Instead, the Sunday before December 25, the pastor was to preach on the birth of Jesus Christ, and that was that.

Much has changed in most Reformed churches along the way to the 20th century. Even the more conservative Free Reformed and Netherlands Reformed churches hold services on Christmas day, although Christmas carols are sung only at a Sunday school or Christian school children's program.

But Epiphany has not made it back in a very convincing way. Reformed preachers may preach on the visit of the magi, but you can hardly call Epiphany a feast in the Reformed churches. I can't remember eating a piece of Epiphany cake, can you?.

What does it stand for?

Are we Reformed people missing something?

I find that a hard question to answer, if only because nobody is quite sure what Epiphany stands for. The broad understanding of the feast is that it celebrates the appearance of Jesus on earth. *Epiphany* comes from a Greek word that means *to appear* or *to show oneself.* It usually refers to an invisible divine being showing up in a visible form. When God appeared to Moses in a burning bush, that was an epiphany.

In keeping with that broader view, the church has in the past celebrated various important moments in Jesus' life, such as his baptism, the miracle at Cana and especially the adoration of the magi as moments in which God revealed himself in a visible way.

Today the Eastern Orthodox Church tends to focus on the baptism of Jesus by John as the central point of Epiphany, whereas the Western churches focus more on the visit by the magi and on how this is the first showing of God to the gentiles.

In my mind I see the visit of the magi as an extension of Christmas, even though they came several years after Jesus was born. They came for the same reason that the shepherds came: to adore Christ the King.

I do find the idea of God manifesting himself through Jesus too broad a concept to award it a special feast day status in the Christian Church calendar.

Especially since the final epiphany will occur at Christ's second coming!

BW

Christian Courier

formerly known as Calvinist Contact
Founded in 1945

An independent weekly that seeks the truth, care and rule of Jesus Christ as it
— reports on significant happenings in the Christian community and the world,
— expresses opinions that are infused by Scripture and Spirit and rooted in a Reformed perspective,
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Marian Van Til says, Yes, we should!

Epiphany didn't used to mean much to me, but as a church musician and music history student among Anglicans, Lutherans and Catholics, I came to appreciate the value of liturgical "feasts." One of those feasts, Epiphany, occurs on Jan. 6, following the Dec. 25-Jan. 5, 12-day Christmas *festival.*

I now think the Anglican and Lutheran Reformation took a more "Reformed" approach to liturgy and music than did Calvin. Calvin dealt with excesses there not by reforming them but by throwing out the liturgical baby with the festival bath water. His over-reaction has made some of us long for a more balanced, aesthetically as well as spiritually satisfying, approach; that's undoubtedly why Calvinist churches have gradually begun adopting practices from the "high church" tradition.

But what about Epiphany? I believe it's important for three reasons.

The Light gets ever brighter

First, the day itself focuses on the visit of the wise men to whom Christ was revealed as the Light of the World. (There's gentle humor in these *wise* men being led to the Light by a light.) It is the first instance of Christ being revealed to gentiles; and it provides a hint of what the Holy Spirit will do at Pentecost. Second, the January 6 feast initiates the *season* of Epiphany, which ends with the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday. During Epiphany, and really during Lent too, the church focuses on Christ's "epiphany" of himself via his ministry; so the church confronts Christ's baptism, the Transfiguration, the wedding at Cana and the many other miracles.

There's an ironic connection, too, between Epiphany and Lent. Lent centres on the completion of Christ's ministry and on his suffering and death. Myrrh, one of the gifts presented to the child Jesus by the wise men, was a Middle Eastern burial spice (God's irony). That connection has not been lost on hymn writers. For example, stanza 4 of the Epiphany hymn "Earth Has Many a Noble City," by the 4th century monk Aurelius Clemens Prudentius:

Sacred gifts of mystic meaning:
incense doth their God disclose,
gold the King of kings proclaimeth,
myrrh his sepulchre foreshows.

Eating 'Epiphany cake'

Third, we Reformed Christians tend to avoid Christ's *humanity* (except as a mangered baby), perhaps because the implications of God as an adult man can be disquieting. So a season which gets us to think on our Savior, "fully man and fully God" is helpful.

In a sense, when the Spirit finally descends at Pentecost it is a culmination of Epiphany. Then, the focus shifts from Christ's own revelation of himself to its impact, through the Spirit, for not only the apostles, but for the church in future ages.

And who are we in the church but gentiles — like those Eastern sages — transformed by Christ's revelation of himself? That makes me feel a certain kinship with those wise men: they and we, foreigners all. And that brings us back to the *feast* of Epiphany and a day of focusing on those perplexing Eastern visitors, doesn't it?

Perhaps, after all, I can convince Bert Witvoet to share some "Epiphany cake" with me during our afternoon tea on Jan. 6!

MVT

Rural Routes

Maynard
Vander Galien

Food thoughts

The young family sitting across from me in a restaurant one day last week seemed quite hungry as they dug into the pizza they had in front of them. But as the family left to pay the bill I noticed both parents had left part of their pizza uneaten. And the two children left a third of the milk in their glasses.

I sat there wondering about that young family. Do they waste food like that at home? Is that the way these parents raised their children? Why couldn't those kids drink those last two mouthfuls of milk? How come so much expensive food is wasted every day in our throw-it-away society?

We live in a society of plenty, in a land of milk and honey. We should be reminded of that in this first week of January as we look back at Christmas and New Year's Day festivities. Oh, we complain, plenty. But we get foods from around the world at any time of the year, right at our local grocer or supermarket — and for the outlay of approximately 15 per cent of our disposable income, the second lowest in the world.

European attitudes different

However, our society doesn't give a hoot about maintaining food production in Canada. We're not like the Europeans. Many of you are from Europe, or have parents or relatives who lived there and survived the Second World War. More Dutch people died from starvation during the war than from enemy action.

Europeans will not go short of food again, and to make sure of that they authorize their governments to provide a decent living for their primary producers. Farmers are paid well to provide food. And governments keep the store prices reasonable by using general revenues to pay the stores. In other words, society as a whole pays for plentiful food at a price they can afford.

There is a big difference in attitude between Europe and North America. Here the farmer is tempted by ad hoc subsidies to keep him or her producing. It is an old cliche that a farmer lives in hope and dies in despair....

Do GM, Ford, Kraft, Petro-Canada put their products on the market and ask, "What will you give me for it?" Yet with two exceptions, dairy and feather producers, farmers do that every time they market their products.

When I send a fat steer or a cull cow to the cattle sales barn, I wonder how much money I will receive. Did I hit the right market? Were all the buyers present? Was the bidding fair?

Ontario dairy producers basically sell to one customer, Ault Dairies, owned by Labatt, a multinational that couldn't care less where its primary products come from.

Health food extremists scream about hormones in beef, "chemicals" on veggies, etc. But do they tell you that estrogens and hormones are produced naturally by all animals, plants and humans. Do they tell you that 100 grams (3 1/2 oz) of beef contain 1.9 nanograms of estrogen. One hundred-gram serving of peas contains 400 nanograms and a 100-gram serving of cabbage 2,400 nanograms of estrogen. Do they tell you about all the carcinogens that plants produce as bug repellants?

The consumer is being conned. By multinationals which want to put four cents worth of potatoes in a two-dollar bag of salty chips. By our governments which, in some cases, want to look good by pitting farmer against farmer, thus keeping the prices low.

If we don't teach our children the facts and the importance of food production and continue to try to educate the adult consumer, it soon won't matter.

You will take what is on the shelf, at whatever price... and be glad it's there. That's something to think about as we start 1994.

Maynard Vander Galien farms in the Ottawa Valley and writes weekly columns for local newspapers.

The fire is not quenched

Peter and Marja try to answer a question dealing with the day of the resurrection and heaven and hell in the Nov. 26 issue of CC . They don't claim to have all the answers and neither do I. But I don't agree with their statements that "while many people picture hell as a place of eternal torment, we understand from these two chapters (Rev. 20 and 21) that God will actually annihilate its inhabitants, as well as hell itself" and "somehow we sense that there is something profoundly merciful about this second death."

When I read God's Word, I see many references to "eternal fire" (Matt. 25:41), "eternal punishment" (Matt. 25:46), "eternal judgment" (Heb. 6:2), "eternal damnation" (Mark 3:29) and "punishment of eternal fire" (Jude 7). Even Dan. 12:2 speaks of "everlasting contempt."

Jesus himself says in Mark 9:48 about hell that it is a place "where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched." All of this indicates to me that the second death is not annihilation but ongoing torment.

Strong's concordance gives as definition of hell: a name for a place (or state) of everlasting punishment," while Vine's *Expository Dictionary of the New Testament* says of 2 Peter 3:7 that "the idea is not extinction, but ruin, not of being but of well-being."

I, too, struggle with the concept of a loving, merciful God and a God of wrath and eternal judgment. Still, however horrible and frightening the future state of the unbeliever is, I have to take God at his Word.

Ineke Parlevliet
Niagara Falls, Ont.

Temporary hell demeans the cross

I was disappointed to read in the Nov. 26 edition of *Christian Courier* that Peter and Marja understand from Rev. 20, 21 "that God will actually annihilate [hell's] inhabitants, as well as hell itself."

If the inhabitants of hell are annihilated, then, although one might horribly suffer, one would find consolation knowing that such suffering will cease at some future point. One would not need to fear God and could say, "Let God do his worst; an end will come." The "wailing and gnashing of teeth" would change into shouts of joy and gratitude upon entering oblivion.

John Gerstner in *Repent or Perish* (Ligonier, 1990) makes the valid point that annihilation demeans the cross of Christ. If Christ tried to save us only from the wrath of God as expressed in God's ultimate annihilation of unrepentant sinners, then the cross was unnecessary. Would the eternal Son of God (very God of very God, in the words of the Nicene Creed) suffer and die for people who would otherwise enter blessed oblivion? If the [unsaved] wicked earn annihilation, then Christ's death effects the recreation of [the saved] wicked but it does not save them from sin's consequences.

Finally, Rev. 20:10 itself says that the beast, the false prophet and the devil "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." How can Peter and Marja imagine that Satan will not survive and will not suffer forever in the lake of burning sulphur?

It is not my wish to enter upon an extended defence of the doctrine of endless punishment held by such people as Augustine, Calvin, Jonathan Edwards and others, but rather to provide a different understanding than the unsupported imagining of Peter and Marja Slofstra.

I would encourage them and their questioner to read William Hendriksen's *The Bible and the Life Hereafter* (Baker, 1959).

Jelle Bosch
Peterborough, Ont.

Government has nothing to tell churches about racism

I read the interview with Hazel Campayne with interest. However, I note that she works for the Ontario Anti-racism Secretariat. This appear to be a "provincially sponsored" investigation "as to what faith communities are doing in the area of anti-racism." Roughly translated, does this not mean that the Rae government is checking the extent to which churches in Ontario conform to that government's views on racism and anti-racism? Did it occur to anybody to ask what business Mr. Rae has poking about in the faith lives of the citizens of Ontario? Is there any reason to suggest that churches are not already addressing this serious problem on their own?

Tony Vanden Ende
Cambridge, Ont.

Children no longer bored in church

I was surpised to read that when the editor was a child he went to church for entertainment (CC Nov. 26). It's a sad case when children come to church and have to find their own entertainment by watching people, pulling faces at each other and checking out all the girls.

As you should know, this is a thing of the past, just as many other things have changed in the church for the good. I believe in the faith of our fathers but not in their habits.

For instance, we don't sell church seats anymore, we don't sing only psalms, we use musical instruments other than the organ and we don't have "poor" people anymore.

And we have a "children's church," also known as Sunday school, during the service. Children go there not for entertainment but to learn and to worship — to celebrate Sunday just as their parents do.

There are too many people like you who keep passing on the things their parents and grandparents did years ago.

When I was a child, I was very bored in church. I ate peppermints and counted organ pipes since I did not understand the minister, who was talking to my parents. Today we can all celebrate Sunday, each our own way.

We should be thankful that in most churches today our children are not being ignored anymore.

So I would say to you, please wake up and get with it.

Gerry Ruyf
Grimsby, Ont.

Accuse and fight locally

We have had SCORR for more than two decades in the Christian Reformed Church; yet Arie Van Eek and Bing Goei say that the deafening silence of the church has aided racism (Nov. 19)! Maybe we should eliminate SCORR? The fight against racism takes place in our local communities and congregations, not through "quota" causes or national meetings.

For Van Eek and Goei to ask the church to stop "sinful behavior" sounds very self-righteous to me. What gives them the authority to say this? Level a charge against a particular person, church or congregation, but don't generalize.

Harry Boessenkool
Surrey, B.C.

Thoughts for the new year

Jesus is coming soon! Happy is the person who acts according to the words of Scripture. Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong. Let her who is vile continue to be vile. Let him who does right continue to do right; and let her who is holy continue to be holy.

Jesus is coming soon! His reward will be with him, and he will give to everyone according to what she or he has done. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the January and the December, the Beginning and the End.

(Paraphrase from Rev. 22)

Small Talk

by Alice Los

Guilt over glossies

I admit to a weakness for glossy women's magazines. Standing in line at the check-out counter in my favorite supermarket is dangerous for me. Inevitably my eyes are drawn to those colorful covers in their strategically placed racks. If I have only disdain for the sensational tabloids which are tucked in there as well, I'm easily taken in by such headlines as "Ten easy steps to clean your house!" (As if I would need such advice! After more than four decades of a career in housekeeping I'm sure I myself could teach today's homemakers a trick or two.)

Such a sobering thought might make me waver in my resolve to add that attractive, alluring bundle of paper to the groceries in my cart. Who needs it? I certainly don't. I still have at least three issues of similar magazines at home.

Did I read them? Not really. I may have paged through them after a hard day's work, making sure I had a steaming cup of coffee nearby (my idea of perfect relaxation).

I probably smiled a few times as I glanced at some pictures or scanned a column or two. Most likely I scoffed at decorating ideas fit only for the palatial homes, and I dismissed most recipes as too complicated or too temptingly rich.

One goes a long way, doesn't it?

Yet as I inch my way forward in the line-up, another cover blares, "Stress busters!" Hmm, I could use a few of those! I ignore the notion, which reminds me that stress in my life is mostly self-imposed and could be conquered by a healthy dose of common sense. As I reach for the shiny volume I notice that the price has gone up — again. I hesitate as I battle with a sense of good stewardship. I know I could spend that money better than on such a glossy, make-you-feel-good-and-cosy paper.

Or could I? After all, the young women in my family who know better than to spend *their* hard-earned money on this stuff will come looking for it at Mom's place. They know they will find several copies there and they carry copies off to their own homes on the first come-first served principle. Then, when they've satisfied their moderate interest, their little ones take over with their safety scissors and cut out all the pictures they can find of babies and bunnies. A few of the gradeschool crowd may even come upon some material for a collage or class project.

And don't I have some three-year-old issue in the house somewhere, waiting for the day I will have time to crochet those potholders which were featured in a December issue with "Fifty easy gifts to make" beckoning on its cover? Surely those few dollars go an awfully long way, I think as I end my battle with "that stewardship thing."

'Stress busters' win out

It will be my turn next. There's no magazine in my buggy yet. "How to lose 10 pounds fast!" I see out of the corner of my eye as I start to organize the oatmeal, milk and oranges for processing by the cashier. *Just eat less*, I tell myself. Then, when the last tin can glides to the cashier's nimble fingers I grab and fling a magazine towards her. "Stress busters" won out.

Alice Los lives in Listowel, Ont.

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Stained glass enthusiast shares her work

Marian Van Til

Ruth Kamps has retired from being a dorm parent at Rehoboth, a residential Christian school begun many years ago as a Christian Reformed mission to Navajos. But Kamps hasn't retired her love of stained glass, and she wants other stained glass enthusiasts to have access to patterns she has developed (in creating figures, "sun-catchers," or panels, you work from a pattern, much like you do when sewing).

So Kamps has published a book of stained glass patterns. That's not unusual; there are dozens, perhaps hundreds of such books (though it's still difficult to find ones to suit a variety of tastes and abilities).

What is unusual is that Kamps doesn't mind if anyone who buys her book sells the stained glass objects they make from her patterns. Most stained glass pattern books allow the purchaser to use the patterns to make objects for personal enjoyment but not to sell. But Kamps doesn't mind if people "make a little money" using her patterns. "I'm saying, 'Go for it,'" she asserts. "It gives them an opportunity...to pay for their stained glass habit."

Southwestern influence

It took about two years to develop the 38-page book, Kamps explains. She began by selling individual patterns to arts and crafts shops before she finally decided to pull her patterns together into a book. The resulting collection of 31 patterns has a Southwestern U.S./Native American theme. There are coyotes, cacti, roadrunners, geckos (a type of lizard), Navajo squaw dancers, young Zuni Olla women and much more.

Kamps came to her love of stained glass by way of a love for painting and art in general. And that love of painting developed by way of a few lessons her husband, Roland, signed her up for without telling her; he suspected she had talent.

Those "few lessons" turned into 10 years of art study, the development of artistic competence, and numerous sales of her works in local galleries.

"The paintings helped me get started in stained glass, which can be an expensive hobby," says Kamps. "At first it was 'sell an oil painting, buy a grinder'; 'sell a painting, buy more glass.'"

Though she loves stained glass work and has recently taught a class in it, Kamps says she misses painting. She admits, "Painting is art. Stained glass is more of a glorified craft" — unless, of course, you're doing cathedral windows, a whole other world of stained glass.

U.S. appeals court throws out indecency ban for broadcasters

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — U.S. government rules that prohibit broadcasts of "indecent" material from 6 a.m. to midnight were thrown out Nov. 23 by a three-member panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia.

The court said the ban is unconstitutionally broad and infringes on the First Amendment rights of broadcasters. It is the third time the court has struck down "indecency" policies. The appeals court suggested that it could be possible for the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to regulate indecent speech in a constitutional manner, but did not explain how.

The FCC policy, drafted at the request of Congress, defined "indecent" programs as those which describe, "in terms patently offensive as measured by contemporary community standards... sexual or excretory activities or organs."

Congress and the FCC originally tried to enact a 24-hour ban on indecent broadcasts. When that was struck down, an 18-hour ban was proposed, with the time from midnight to 6 a.m. serving as a "safe harbor" for indecent speech. But the court criticized the scheme, saying the government "has not adduced any evidence suggesting that the effectiveness of parental supervision varies by time of day or night...."

Canadian orchestra, American ballet to present 'Romeo and Juliet'

Marian Van Til

HAMILTON, Ont. — The Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra (HPO) will team up next month with the Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania) Ballet Theatre to present a performance of Sergei Prokofiev's ballet "Romeo and Juliet," based on Shakespeare's play. Prokofiev's music to "Romeo and Juliet" is the most widely used since Tchaikovsky's classic version in the 19th century.

The production will be conducted by HPO resident conductor Akira Endo, who came to the orchestra just last year, and will be choreographed by Bruce Wells of the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre. Wells has also worked with the Australian Ballet, Boston Ballet, Milwaukee Ballet and Ballet Omaha.

Wells says of "Romeo and Juliet": "With this play, Shakespeare explores the beauty, passion and pain of love in a way that is completely at home on the ballet stage. It is clearly one of the crowning jewels in the ballet repertoire. [Romeo and Juliet's] love and passion are compounded by the mistakes of youth. Because the lovers are so young — Juliet is just 15 when she meets Romeo — their reaction time is much quicker. They just aren't wise enough to judge the consequences of their actions."

Along with Prokofiev's compelling music, the production will contain "sumptuous scenery" featuring 16 backdrops and 130 costumes. Performances are Feb. 26 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Feb. 27 at 2 p.m. in the Great Hall of Hamilton Place.

Early books bring high prices

LONDON, England (EP) — Rare Hebrew books and manuscripts brought $1.64 million in an auction at Sotheby's in London. The 162 items were from the private collection of Salman Schocken, a German Jew who died in 1959.

Included in the collection were some of the world's earliest known books, many filled with the records of Jewish owners who carried them into exile. A copy of the first Jewish prayer book printed in the U.S., dating to 1766, sold for $7,216, and a copy of Yakov Ben Asher's Rabbinic Code of Jewish Law and Customs sold to a private collector for $120,600.

American churches speak out against televised violence

NEW YORK, N.Y. (EP) — The National Council of Churches (NCC) in the U.S. urged voluntary restrictions on televised violence in a statement late last year, but opposed the kind of government bans on violent programming recently agreed to in Canada.

"As objectionable as we find media violence, we do not believe government censorship is a viable and appropriate solution," said the NCC's general board, meeting in Baltimore.

"We strongly object, however, to what we see as the misuse of the First Amendment by commercial interests as a cover for a quest for profit."

The NCC approved the statement after viewing a videotaped message from Sen. Paul Simon, a Democrat from Illinois, who is leading a drive against television violence. In the tape, Simon said, "If you have 30 seconds of glamorizing a bar of soap, you sell a bar of soap. If you have 30 seconds of glamorizing a pair of shoes, you sell a pair of shoes. And if you have 25 minutes of glamorizing violence, you sell violence."

The NCC statement urges families, churches, the federal government, and media outlets to reduce violence.

Cinema Summaries returns next week.

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"WE STAND BENEATH OUR ROOFS"

Church, Marian Van Til, page editor

Filipino laity takes lead in church planting

PILATIW, The Philippines (CRWM) — The children were driving Henry Steen crazy in the *esconita*, the narrow alley between the houses and open sewers in the community of Pilatiw near downtown Manila. He had standards for the Saturday "Children's Bible Hour" and he wanted the children to listen intently to the stories he was telling them. But the 30 or more kids were unruly, making a mess with the crayons, scissors, and glue. One older child in particular came just for the refreshments, and took more than his share of the cookies.

Six years later, in 1991, Henry Steen had a different encounter with the young cookie hoarder. A church had been formed in Pilatiw and a young man named Jojo Costiamano was one of several Filipinos Steen was training to be church planters.

"I had clued in on Jojo as a fellow with a lot of potential," Steen recalls. "His most notable characteristics are that he is very industrious and very cheerful."

Steen and his colleagues see their role as missionaries diminishing over time, with the ultimate goal to have Filipinos train their fellow citizens for church planting and church leadership in areas around existing PCRC churches. Missionaries would move to pioneer work in areas where there are currently no churches, such as ministries begun recently on the islands of Leyte and Mindanao. For now, Steen and some other missionaries are training the trainers to reach this goal. Jojo is one of 70 Filipinos Steen is training to be church planters among their own people.

'The gift of eating'

Steen didn't immediately connect the bright young man in church planters training with the mischievous child of previous Bible story times. It was during a "Discover Your Gifts" workshop at Jojo's church when people joked that Jojo had "the gift of eating" that Steen realized his promising church planter today was the annoying cookie thief a few years earlier.

"Ironically, eating is a gift for Jojo because it got him introduced to the church and ultimately to the Lord," Steen reflects. "Now, too, eating is so much a part of fellowship in the Philippines."

At the *merienda*, or "snack time," Filipinos come together in a sort of potluck and celebrate their relationships with fellow Christians with joy. Jojo has been effective in adding enthusiasm to such happy, unity-building occasions.

"When I found out who he was I was so enthused," says Steen. "It was the ultimate in encouragement that the work had been blessed. Jojo is very bright, and I foresee that he will eventually be a trainer of church planters. It's a model of what I want to see happen again and again."

Filipinos study church planting at a leadership training workshop. PHOTO: CRWM

The model is being duplicated in different forms. Purita Legaspi is a 40-year-old widow who is as calm as Jojo is expressive. When Steen asked her to write a vision statement for a church planter, she simply penned "visit people."

"What she said about church planting is also what she does as a deacon," Steen explains. Purita, whose husband was an elder and founder of the Quezon City Christian Reformed Church, plants churches by enabling men to do the ministry. When Purita took training in expository preaching with other church planters, for example, she taught what she learned with the men of the church and encouraged them to preach.

"She actually is a leader behind the scenes, motivating and encouraging emerging church leaders," Steen says. The church order of the Philippines Christian Reformed Church (PCRC) allows for women deacons, while elders and pastors are men. Because of the church planting movement in the PCRC, the number of organized congregations is expected to double from 35 to 70 by 1995, while the number of emerging congregations is expected to grow from 65 to 120 during the same period.

"As the North American church we offer a lot to the PCRC, but we can learn from them too," Steen says. "With regard to church planting, it's so relative to the context. Here in the United States church planting is such a profession, and that's good. But there is some insight that in the Philippines church planting is done by men and women who know how to ask the right questions in a Bible study."

Revival in Colombia fuelled by Bible League Scriptures

SOUTH HOLLAND, Ill. (TBL) — "When you hear the word 'Colombia,' what's the first thing that comes to mind?" asks Rev. Ed Meyer, Director of The Bible League's ministries in Latin America. "The first thing most North Americans think of is 'drugs.' Drug lords, drug-related crimes, major drug sales — these and Colombia go together."

Meyer's observation is true. But he and Bible League staff in Colombia and North America believe that era is past. Colombia is experiencing a spiritual revival, fuelled partly by Scriptures and training provided by The Bible League.

The Bible League (formerly World Home Bible League) is an international Scripture placement agency based near Chicago, Ill., with offices and contacts in more than 90 countries worldwide, including Canada. Their Latin American ministry division is responsible for the largest Scripture placement campaign in history: "Brazil: New Life for the 90s," which has placed more than 18 million Scriptures in Brazil to date. They are now using their resources and expertise to bring change to Colombia.

Colombia's tradition of drug-related violence reached its heyday in the 1980s when the country was unofficially divided into territories ruled by guerrilla generals. The guerrillas and their followers soon began fighting amongst themselves, leading to civil wars which devastated the entire country. Banks were robbed, and extortion rackets took huge amounts of money from farmers and businesspeople. The major drug cartels were at war with each other. Thousands of innocent people were killed indiscriminately.

But with the fall of the Soviet Union, Cuban President Fidel Castro no longer had the resources to fuel wars in Colombia and other satellite countries. The link between the guerrillas, organized crime, and the drug lords was broken. Colombia was open to the Gospel. Colombian church leaders began thinking about "growth" instead of just "survival."

The evangelical presence in Colombia is small. DAWN (Discipling A Whole Nation) reports indicate that only 1.25 million people are Christians (out of a population of 34 million). Out of that 1.25 million there are no more than 3,000 evangelical churches in the entire country by some estimates. Still, this limited community is becoming more vocal and aggressive, and The Bible League's office in Colombia has been one of the catalysts in promoting church growth.

In order to make its ministry effective throughout Colombia, The Bible League's seven-person staff in Colombia has divided the country into five zones. Starting from a key city in each zone, the plan is to train leaders who will infiltrate the entire area. The Bible League's office in Colombia is a member of CEDECOL (Concilio Evangelico De Colombia, or Evangelical Council of Colombia), so they already have a working relationship with most of the churches in Colombia.

Their strategy involves two emphases: community outreach by existing churches; and planting new churches in unreached areas. In both cases, the league not only provides Scriptures, but also trains people to use them evangelistically. Training has already been done in the five targeted cities.

Recently The Bible League hosted a three-day conference in Bogota for Christians interested in church planting. Most of the 90 participants were pastors and church workers. Some were already engaged in the process of planting a new church and needed additional training. Others were interested in bringing new vitality and growth to their existing churches. The attendees received advice and techniques from Bible League staff, but they also worked in small groups to share with and learn from each other.

Failure or faithfulness?

The latest book by Reg Bibby,* Unknown Gods, *has bad news for mainline churches, especially the United Church. Bibby predicts a huge decline in membership for the coming years. The editor of* The Observer *(Nov. '93) compares Bibby with the neighbor "who tells you that your car is starting to rust out around the trunk." She summarizes the sombre predictions and reflects on them in the following observations:

"This time around, Bibby tells us, things are even worse:

• Membership and attendance are steadily declining; some baby boomers are coming back to church but not enough to replace the aging active members.

• The vast majority of immigrants coming to Canada are Christian, but often they imitate our own low participation tendencies.

• Evangelism isn't making much headway with the unchurched.

• We've lost authority, confidence and influence. We're running out of volunteers and money.

"According to Bibby, we are more than a little to blame for our own sorry state. And he breaks into the irritating but effective language of business to tell us how. Canadian religious groups don't compete with each other in an open market the way the Americans do. We don't encourage recruiting or proselytizing.

"In the meantime, our structural problems are doing us in: our work force is mainly volunteer, our franchises are autonomous, which makes it difficult to have a strong national organization; we're vulnerable to social change but slow to pick up on it; and our image needs improvement.

"The galling thing is, much of Bibby's analysis is probably right. But his marketplace language suggests a marketplace mentality. And that seems terribly dangerous in a church that concerns itself with being a voice for the voiceless.

"However, we will have to ask ourselves some uncomfortable questions. Might we be confusing worldly failure with faithfulness? Many of us are still repenting a history of forcing our beliefs on those with less power. So how do we now share our joy in Jesus in a just and positive way?

"Can we go humbly to those outside our churches, whom Bibby says are looking for meaning, who are open to mystery? Can we open our churches to them so we can search together for answers and community, for faith?

"It's probably important, at this time, to stand out in the driveway with Bibby, that annoying neighbor, and take a closer look at the rust. While there is still time."

The church and the aged

The editor of* The Messenger *(Free Reformed Churches) wrote in November on the church and the elderly. He remarks that in our days people reach old age in better shape than ever before. He recommends that the church make good use of elderly people and recognize their abilities. Older people should not have to feel that they are useless.

"The church should be sensitive to these fears that many elderly have and reassure them that they are important and useful members of society and the church. To limit ourselves to church activities, there are many things they can do.

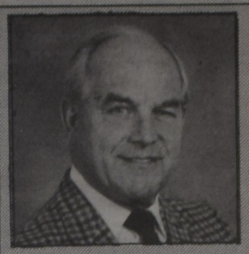
"Older male members who are in good health could easily serve in the consistory or perform other useful tasks in the congregation. True, there are capable men who, when they are asked to serve, refuse. They want to enjoy their retirement, fishing or travelling and spending time in Florida and other resort areas. Of course, no one will begrudge our seniors a well-earned rest and a nice vacation from time to time.

"But unless there are health reasons which make it advisable for seniors to spend extended periods of time in locations where the climate is better for them, it is better for themselves, their loved ones and their congregation, to stay where the Lord has placed them and given them a task. Our churches and families need the support, spiritual, moral, as well as financial (!) from the older members. Our grandchildren should not have to grow up without seeing their 'Opas and Omas' at least once a week!

"Our elderly sisters, too, have resources which could be utilized. Just think of what Paul writes to Titus about the role of widows in the church.

"With the ever increasing number of older members, many of whom are in good health, the church has access to resources which need to be tapped far more than has been done so far.

"And even those who are not in good physical condition can be useful. They can still serve the church with their prayers, advice and insights based on years of life experience."



CANADIAN CHURCH SCENE

Jacob Kuntz

The Salvation Army today

Will the Salvation Army begin to downplay its military image? That's the impression we get from a short article in* Mennonite Reporter *of Nov. 15. The new (Canadian) commander Bramwell Tillsley may want to introduce some new ideas.

"The Salvation Army may be considering its military imagery under its new leader, Bramwell Tillsley from Kitchener, Ont., who became the 14th general of the worldwide body in July, has hinted at a willingness to 'update' some of the traditional military terms. Currently, ministers are called captains and colonels, weekly services are 'corps units,' and their statement of faith is the 'articles of war.' Tillsley, 61, also believes it's time to take a fresh look at another Salvation Army tradition — the appointment of women to church positions by virtue of their husband's appointments. When married men are appointed to officer rank, their wives are given the same rank, with a job to suit their skills. According to Tillsley, the role of wives is 'one of the leading questions being asked today' in the Salvation Army."

Open letter on AIDS

In today's world every church must face the painful reality that in the Christian community, too, there are people who have AIDS. In the* Mennonite Reporter *of Nov. 15 we found the following open letter to the Mennonite churches, coming from the president of the Brethren/Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns:

"As members of the Brethren/Mennonite Council for Lesbian and Gay Concerns, we are often close to people who are infected with the HIV virus, or who have died from AIDS-related diseases.

"Education about the disease and about the changing of behavior is the most effective weapon we now have in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

"We know that gay men have been particularly susceptible to this disease. However, statistics now show that the largest percentage increase in HIV/AIDS cases is occurring in the heterosexual population, particularly in women.

"Our Brethren/Mennonite youth are not immune to the disease. We know there will always be young people who choose a life different from that taught by their parents and the church.

"Not only our gay children are at risk of AIDS, but our straight children are as well.

"We ask the church to respond to AIDS by facing the reality of the paths taken by some young people — and by recognizing the importance that they be given the information that may save their lives.

"We implore parents, teachers, pastors and counsellors to speak to our children and to arm them with the facts regarding HIV/AIDS.

"We call for education and discussion with our children about the transmission and prevention of the disease.

"We call for understanding and compassion toward all people with HIV/AIDS and their families. We pray that the loving spirit of Christ be shared in this critical era of the AIDS epidemic."

Jacob Kuntz is a retired Christian Reformed pastor who lives and works in Brampton, Ont.

It's hard to forgive the ENEMY

Meeting of fighters at the Western Wall. PHOTO: SANDU MANDREA

Berta Hosmar

I visited Israel in November as part of a Christian tourgroup. During our 11-day stay we were in the partisan hands of two Jewish tour guides, who were with us most of the time. Eli, a man of about 40, was born in Israel, and Suzan, in her fifties, was born in the U.S. but has lived in Israel for almost 20 years. Both guides wasted no opportunity to "advertise" Israel to us.

Eli had a keen sense of humor. He noticed that his busload of tourists was a little nervous on the Golan Heights. Just that morning an Arab terrorist leader had been killed by the Israelis, and security was tight as always. "Our army is on alert 24 hours a day, and that's why you're in the safest place on earth," he would assure us. "We expect danger, and that's why we are always prepared. That's why Israel is so safe."

It became a joke. Whenever we saw roadblocks or armed soldiers, male and female, or heard helicopters flying low, he would cry happily: "Don't worry, they're ours!" until we all joined in.

Besides telling us all about the places we visited, Suzan and Eli tried to explain the Israeli-Arab conflict to us, naturally giving us the Israeli point of view. "We had no choice but to fight for our territory, since the neighboring countries threatened to drive us into the sea," they told us.

Both guides were very much afraid of the proposed peace plan between Israel and the PLO. They felt that this peace is being forced on them by the superpowers. They had no faith in the promises of Yasser Arafat. They also believed that the Messiah will come to Jerusalem and establish his kingdom there, and that's why Israel has to be prepared for the final war. They believed that then Israel will again become a blessing for all nations.

It seemed strange at times to here these two people talk about the birthplace of Jesus and point out the places where he did his miracles, while disbelieving that the Messiah had already come. They talked about Jesus the way we might talk about Mohammed.

Eli told us, while we were driving in the West Bank, how frightened his two little girls had been during the Gulf War, when they had to don gas masks. He also told us that Israel had been the first nation to accept a few hundred boat people, because the government would not refuse them, remembering how many boats with Jewish refugees had been turned away from the shores of free countries at the onset of World War II.

He also proudly related the fact that Israel had absorbed two million Jewish refugees from Ethiopia and Russia.

He even tried to explain to us that Israel had really done the PLO a favor by killing these two terrorists and throughout the trip we became more and more sympathetic to the Jewish cause, sometimes forgetting the Arabic side of the story.

Until we came to Bethlehem. Here we came face to face with the deep-seated antagonism between at least a few Jews and a few Arabs.

Photo opportunity?

On the itinerary was a visit to Bethlehem Bible College in the West Bank. This college provides a Christian witness in the community and provides training for young native Arab Palestinians to minister the gospel to their own people. The college was founded in 1979 by local Arabs and provides training for 20 to 30 students.

Upon entering Bethlehem we noticed something was wrong. People were standing idly on the sidewalks, and stores and restaurants were closed. We heard the PLO had called for a general strike to protest the killings of the two terrorists.

We parked in front of the college and noticed that Suzan and Eli also entered the college instead of going somewhere else as we had expected. Undoubtedly it was safer for them at the college during this unrest.

They sat in the very back of the room while the president of the college, Mr. Bishara Awad, gave us a short history of the college. Mr. Awat is a dear Christian friend of one of our group leaders. This group leader had previously given us a few details about the lives of both Suzan and Mr. Awad.

Suzan's son had been severely injured by the Arabs and had become an amputee. During his illness the Christians on her bus had prayed for her son, and these prayers, plus the love Suzan had experienced, had made such an impression on her that she said she could almost forgive the Arabs for mutilating her son.

On the other side was Mr. Awad. His ailing father had been dragged outside by Israeli soldiers and had been brutally killed right in front of Mr. Awad's eyes. Both Suzan and Mr. Awad had to overcome a great deal of bitterness, and both thought they had forgiven the enemy.

Now they were all in the same room, Mr. Awad and his wife, Suzan and Eli. Before Mr. Awad started his speech he made a few remarks that must have put Suzan and Eli on edge.

"You've heard about the killings, but don't believe everything you hear on TV," he told us. "The Arabs are fine people but they have been driven from their territory by the Jews in 1967 and that's why they are hurting. I love the Arabs — I'm an Arab myself. And God loves the Arabs too."

After his talk about the college, our group leader, on the spur of the moment, asked everybody, including Suzan, Eli and the staff of the Bible college, to come forward for a group picture.

We could feel the tension in the room.

Suzan stood up, visibly pale and tense. After a few moments she came forward and stood ready to pose, as far away from Mr. Awad and his wife as possible. Eli refused to come. Mr. Awad was smiling.

We left soon after. "I didn't know I had not completely forgiven," said Suzan honestly.

Eli explained, "Nobody shook my hand at the college. I did not agree with that remark of Mr. Awad. What choice did we have in 1967? We did not ask for that war, believe me. We want peace more than anything; we have never had it. And furthermore, before 1967 there was not a single college in the West Bank. Look what Israel has done for the Arabs!"

That night after dinner, our group leader asked for a prayer meeting. The needs of the Middle East, the tension and hatred between people, were put before God's throne.

Berta Hosmar is a freelance writer who lives in Whitby, Ont.

The courses of the age are his

Abraham Kuyper wrote the following thoughts 90 years ago

With the completion of the year another limit is set upon your life and upon the number of your days.

A new year is brought into the allotted span of your life. It was 1903, and so it remained throughout all those months, all those weeks, all those days. But now it is ended. It is gone and will never return. Now you pass into 1904, and involuntarily you ask what this year will bring you and yours. Whether this year will outlive you, or whether you will outlive it. And this of itself prompts you, at the threshold of this year, to look up to your Father in heaven, to ask little but to trust much, to lay the hand upon the mouth, and, quietly as the weaned child, to await what God will bring upon you and upon your dear ones.

"The courses of the age are his," declares the prophet (Hab. 3:6, Dutch Ver.). God counts and reckons with centuries, as the dial of your clock, with hours and minutes. You are the little one in need of help, who counts with tenths of a second; your God bathes himself in eternity with millions of time periods at once. There is no comparison conceivable between your reckoning of time and the time reckoning of God.

With God it is the ever welling, the always bubbling up, the perennially bountiful, overflowing fountain of the eternal; with you it is the dripping of the moments, audible to you in the tick of the seconds. How unbearably long sometimes, when you must wait, five single minutes seem.

Our time, God's eternity

Never must this more than gigantic difference between you and your God be lost from sight; a difference that stretches so far that it is absolutely impossible for us to make plain to our understanding the relation between our time and the eternity of our God, though we know that this relation must be there, and is. Surely, if you die happily in Christ, you too shall one day enter upon this eternity in order to enjoy therein great things eternally; but yet, even this shall never be to you the eternity of your God.

Though at present you live eternally, you have had a beginning, but your God, never. "Before the mountains were brought forth, yea, from eternity to eternity, thou art God" (Ps. 90). And this never applies to humanity.

But however inconceivably great this difference is between you who live by hours, and your God to whom the courses of the age belong, such is the grace of your Lord that he breaks the period of your lifetime, from the cradle to the grave, into parts of years and into parts of days and into parts of hours and minutes, and thereby imparts to your otherwise so short life, a breadth, a lengthening of duration and a richness of scope which makes you bathe yourself in the little pond of the brief years of your life as in an ocean.

Time and its division into years and days has not been invented by you; it has been ordained for you by your God. "And the evening and the morning were the first day" is the creation word whereby this entire order and division of time was appointed in your behalf, before man and woman had yet appeared on this earth.

Sun and moon and the rotation of the earth and the pulsation of the blood in your veins have been disposed with the view of dissolving your life into minutes and seconds. And it is through this wondrous means, wonderful in its simple design, that the grace and the loving kindness of your God has created, on behalf of you and because of you, a wealth of life in the past, now in the present, and before long in the future, whereby your life, which by itself is so short, becomes almost immeasurably long and great, both in retrospect and prospect.

Even that one year that now again lies behind you seemed so long to you that only a few of its more significant days are clearly remembered, and the new year that begins makes an impression as though it could never end.

Yea, and what is more, not only has your God, whose ways are everlasting, richly divided your life and thereby mightily enlarged it in your idea, but he entered and continually enters into this your minutely

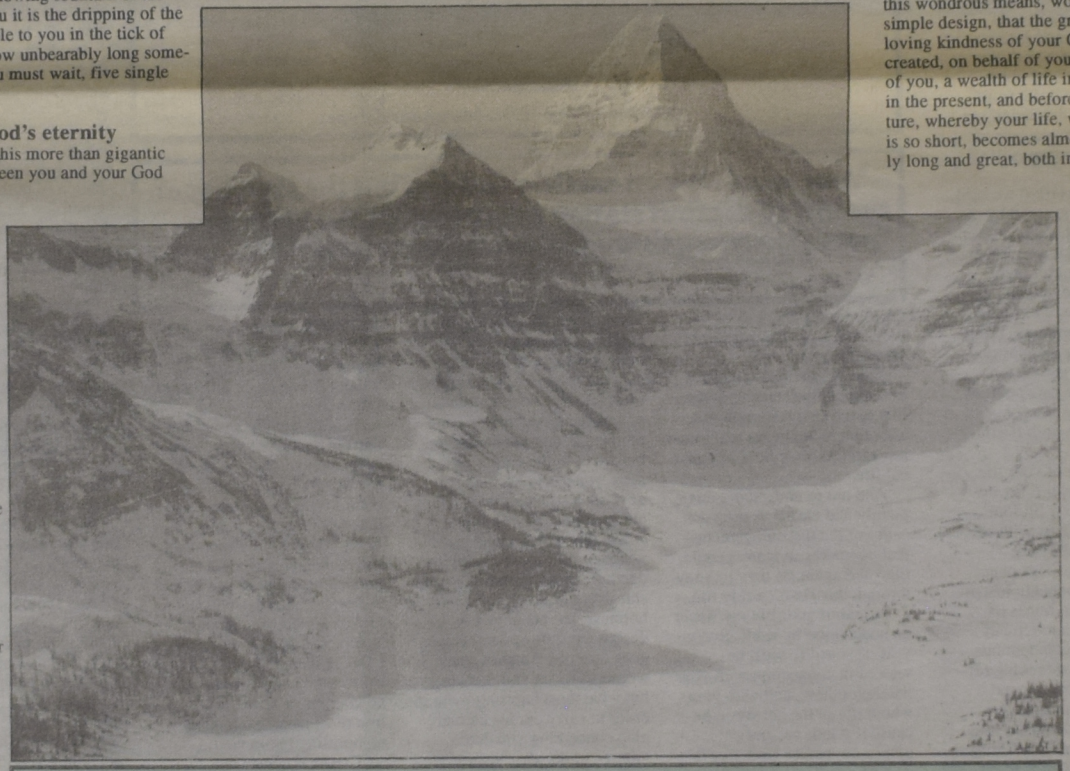


PHOTO: CANADA COAST TO COAST BY GRACE DEUTSCH AND AVANTHIA SWAN

"Before the mountains were brought forth, yea, from eternity to eternity, thou art God" (Ps. 90)

(Continued on p. 12...)

Feature

The courses of the age are his

...continued from p. 11

divided life with his faithfulness and fatherly care.

From week to week and from day to day his compassion and his love are over you, new every morning and glistening with new brightness every evening. From hour to hour he goes before you on the way. And all along to the very subdivisions of your hours into minutes and seconds, the pulsation of your blood in your heart is his work. He takes notice of every sigh that from your heart goes up toward him.

Time is a gift of grace

He is the Father of the everlasting ages who from sheer grace, for the sake of enrichment, divides the life of his child even to its minutest parts and enters into every one of these parts and subdivisions with his grace to protect you.

But if God himself thus divides your life and enters into every part of it with his grace, it is incumbent upon you, on the other hand, from this temporarily divided life to reach out after the courses of the age and lift up yourself to the eternal.

In Revelation (10:6) we read that the angel who stood by the sea lifted up his hand to heaven and "sware by him who liveth for ever and ever *that there should be time no longer.*"

Time is a form of existence that is given us by grace, but it is unreal; eternity alone is real. In eternity alone our destiny lies, and from the viewpoint of eternity alone can your existence, your future, your destiny be understood.

Whatever year of your life you may consider, it is never understood by itself. Before God, your whole life, with all its years, is one plan, one design, one whole. This plan, this design did not begin just with your birth but traces its lines backwards to the life of your parents and grandparents.

And likewise, in looking forward, this plan does not end with your death but extends across death and the grave into the everlasting ages of eternity. Even though you live here 70 or 80 years, this part of your life which you live on earth shrinks almost into nothing when you put it alongside of the thousands and tens of thousands of years that await you in eternity.

A graven image of Dr. Abraham Kuyper

Your whole life on earth is nothing but the starting of the line to the first station in order after that to begin the real journey through your field of eternal life.

Your whole life on earth is nothing but the starting of the line to the first station in order after that to begin the real journey through your field of eternal life.

And not to understand this plainly and clearly is the great cause of the discouragement that overtakes so many people, time and again, as they journey through this short earthly life.

A year of your life can never be understood by itself. Every year of your life must be viewed in connection with your whole life here, and with your whole life in the hereafter, because it stands so, and not otherwise, before God, and is so, and not otherwise, to be explained.

He who fashions, forms and prepares you for eternity is the Lord. In his fashioning of your heart, in the forming of your person, in his preparation of your spirit within you for eternity the courses of the age are his. Not what would provide you pleasure and love for the moment is the standard here; but what, in the course of the ages, you are to become governs his plan of your life and existence.

On this long way he leads you now through darkness and depth, then again through sunshine on the mountains of his holiness, but his plan, his design regarding you always goes through. And not what would smile on you this year, but what must happen to you in order to carry out his eternal plan concerning you determines and decides what this year shall bring you. And why it must be so and not otherwise you cannot understand now, but will hereafter.

The person who forgets this has no peace; but he who with his whole soul enters into this doing of his God, rests, whatever comes, in his Father's faithfulness.

If, now, caught within the narrow bounds of time, you continue to reckon by the day, by the week, and your heart becomes bitter every time that that day things go wrong or bring nothing but disappointment, then you become the prey of irresolution and gloom.

Then it becomes one unbroken recital of complaint, a steady wail and lament; and the habit of seeing all things black overmasters you. Then there is no courage of faith, no inspiration to work out your destiny, no uplifting joy in God.

Thence it comes that thousands upon thousands become either coldly indifferent or continue the weary struggle with dejection and disheartenment till the end of their days.

And the person who so lives, what is he other than a playball before the wind of the day, and how far that person sinks below his dignity as a human being. For does not the Prophet say (Eccl. 3:2) that "God hath set eternity in the heart?" And "eternity in the heart," what else can it mean than that God created in us the capacity to lift ourselves up from this whirling of the flakes of time around us to the fixedness of the eternal?

A refiner's fire

With this "eternity in the heart" let every child of God, therefore, bravely face the newly opening year. The child of God knows that he worships a God whose are the everlasting ages, and that therefore God designs and also directs his life only in keeping with what eternity shall one day demand. He prays that it may be peace and joy, for after happiness his heart thirsts.

But if this year he must go through a period when God puts him in the smelting furnace or makes finer cuttings on the diamond of his soul, then, though tears make his eyes glisten he will nobly bear up in exaltation of faith; for then it is certain that he is in need of this, that it cannot be otherwise, and that, if it did go otherwise, his life would be a failure forever.

To have to undergo a painful operation is hard, and yet the sick one willingly submits, and in the end pays large sums of money to the operator because he knows, that this drastic treatment alone could save him.

And just like this, God's child stands before his Father in heaven. Not he, but God alone, must know what is indispensable and necessary for him this year, and what in view of his *permanent* fashioning, this year must bring him.

And should it be the case that this year such a divine operation proves to be necessary, the child of God will not murmur and complain, but willingly submit to God, yea, though the waves of sorrow should go over him, he will nevertheless rejoice in his God, knowing that what God doeth, *must* be done, both for the sake of God's honor and for his child's own highest good.

Daily bread economics

Bert Hielema

Human bodies on the butcher's block

Today, anything is for sale, and the newest private enterprise is the "human body shop." Two recent media events have focused attention on the pricing of a pound of flesh. A CBC television production in November, as reported in *Time* magazine, showed how humanity is now on the butcher's block. "The Body Parts Business" is especially conducted in countries and continents recently touched by capitalism such as Russia and South America.

The CBC production related how a 14-year-old paraplegic disappeared from an Argentine psychiatric institution; when his body was found, the eyes were missing. Russia, especially, is the scene of some horrible statistics: thousands of bodies go unclaimed in Russian morgues, many with recent, mysterious surgical incisions. One company there sold more than 18,000 thymus glands, 1,172 pairs of eyes and 3,000 pairs of "testicular membranes," the source of these organs being a mystery.

Removal and selling of organs from live humans is common in impoverished areas of the world, where the sale of an eye, kidney or hand can bring the dismembered as much as $15,000. It is a seller's market for human body parts, be they blood, sperm, surrogate uteri or the tissue of fetal remains.

It was 15 years ago that the first test-tube baby was born. Since that time reproductive science has galloped away in a bewildering number of fields, such as IVF (in vitro fertilization), gene therapy and sex selection, all of these having a commercial connection. We now live in the age of the engineering and marketing of life.

'Brave new world'

In 1932 Aldous Huxley published his *Brave New World*, in which human life is mass-produced by precise engineering standards. Today Huxley's vision is becoming commonplace. Scientists are rearranging the very blueprints of life. They are inserting, deleting, recombining, editing and programming genetic sequences within and between species, laying the foundation for a second creation — an artificial one this time — designed with market forces and commercial objectives in mind.

In a world in which the ideology of the market has triumphed at every turn over traditional values and longstanding beliefs, the sacredness of life and the intrinsic value of the creation are rapidly disappearing. It comes as no surprise, then, that the new advances in genetic engineering are being greeted more with open arms than with mass resistance. It seems to me that we are now experiencing the last ecological invasion left to market forces; all other ecosystems, including the stratosphere have already been commercialized.

It is my sincere opinion that the colonization of the human body is the crowning achievement of the powers of capitalism and could well represent the last chapter in the profaning of the human spirit. What we see now is the painful plight of modern woman and man increasingly imprisoned by the twin gods of technology and profit. We are in the final stage of trading away our very souls for the going price of our own parts in the global marketplace.

Bert Hielema still runs 8 km two or three times per week. He believes that prevention, not replacement, is the best medicine.

Elephants saved by being moved to new habitats

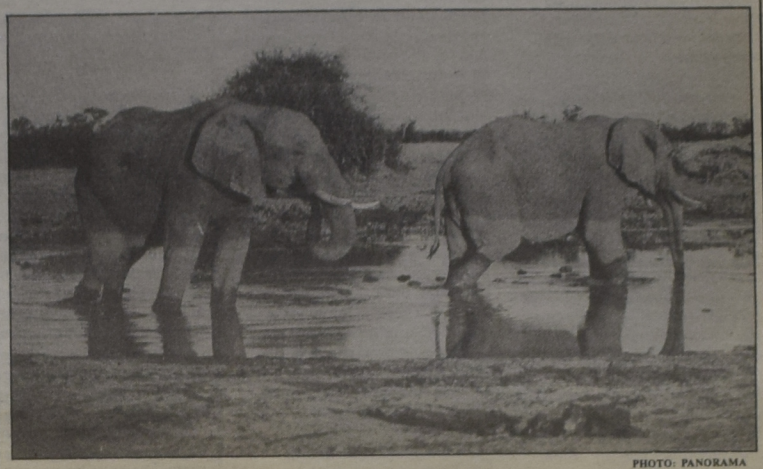


PHOTO: PANORAMA

Elephants in the Kruger National Park in South Africa.

Marian Van Til

Elephants, being huge animals, eat vast amounts. And they live in extended-family groups. Both those factors mean that they need a lot of space. But with the ever-increasing population and cultivation of Africa, elephants are now being confined mainly to national parks and refuges, where a finite amount of land cannot properly contain the animals. In such parks there are too many animals.

In areas where elephants could still roam there are few or none.

Poachers take their toll, and the controversial government-condoned answer to elephant over-population of certain parts of Zimbabwe and several other sub-Saharan countries has been to shoot "excess" elephants. However, culling, whether legal or illegal, destroys the elephants' closely knit family groupings and causes the remaining animals much stress.

'We're moving to South Africa'

Now, however, there's an alternative, and one that seems to be working well so far, reported *Newsweek* on Dec. 6, 1993. In a program sponsored jointly by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and British-based Care for the Wild, whole families of elephants are being moved — apparently without damaging their intricate social structure — to national parks in South Africa and non-park areas of Zimbabwe.

Clem Coetsee, a former wildlife "culler," devised the plan. He proved that elephants can be safely sedated for up to 48 hours with a mixture of the tranquilizers haloperidol and trilafont. The tranquilized animals are loaded onto trucks and then, sedated but conscious, are driven (as many as eight to a transport truck) to their new homes.

No more dodging bullets

Since August 1993, 600 elephants have been relocated from Zimbabwe's Gona-re-zhou National Park; 200 of those have been driven the 650-mile trek to the Madikwe Game Reserve in South Africa's Bophuthatswana homeland. Out of the 600, "only" 15 have died.

Newsweek quotes Coetsee as saying, "You've got to manage the population. But if we can find homes for them and move them live, what a pleasure!" Adds Coetsee's partner, Henry Hallward, who is director of Care for the Wild, "[Ideally] we shouldn't be moving them; that's interfering with the elephant population. But we're not going to allow them to be culled."

Other African countries have expressed interest in the project. In Cameroon's Kaele farming region, where elephants eat the crops on land they used to be able to graze, the animals could be moved into Cameroon's national parks. Bringing elephants to areas where their populations have been depleted also increases tourist interest — and dollars — for the farmers in those areas.

This transfer program, in *Newsweek's* words, may just be "the best news for elephants since Dumbo learned to fly."

Look for our Business Directory next week!

Christian education in action

The Potato Parable *by Curt Gesch. Telkwa, B.C.: Eskerhazy Publications, 1993; 66 pp., $7. Reviewed by Dianne Hornor, missionary in Papua New Guinea.*

The Potato Parable is a spiral bound, soft-cover collection of 16 speeches given by author and teacher Curt Gesch over a period of 15 years, to high school students in chapels, to parents in orientation sessions, and to pastors at promotion luncheons.

The subtitle is "Speeches about Christian Education"; but that description doesn't do justice to the creativity and enthusiastic tone of each speech. They aren't so much *about* Christian education as they *are* Christian education. Gesch, in his preface, hopes that "a certain vision of vital, joy-filled, positive Christian education" is communicated to those of us who read *The Potato Parable*. I believe he's been successful.

Gesch has a unique, artistic knack of using objects (yes, even the potato) and events to teach us about being in God's world as God's children. It's clear that Gesch has worked hard at cultivating a Christian mind within himself and his students (incidentally, the "Christian mind" is a topic explored in one of the speeches). He shows insight into Scripture and joy in communicating those insights, connecting them to our daily lives through peas and Swiss chard, shovels and ditch-digging.

A few speech titles to whet your appetite: "The Parable of the (Obscene) Spud," "A Sermon for Spring," "Polish Jokes and the Christian School," "Too Long Among Those Who Hate Peace," and "Prophecy (From the Back of a Pickup Truck)." Though Gesch hits a fair number of topics, his overall goal is to proclaim that it is God "who inhabits our hearts and inspires the nuts-and-bolts activities of dedicated-to-Christ-classrooms" (from a speech entitled "On Shining like Stars.")

Sharing 'prophecies'

Gesch doesn't spout just his own wisdom, but shares "prophecies" gleaned from students and parents, too. Many of the names will be familiar to those in the Bulkley Valley (perhaps an incentive to buy *The Potato Parable*?)

Who would want to read *The Potato Parable*? I believe that almost anyone who has been a student of Gesch's would enjoy this booklet — as a memory prompter of days in his classroom. But more importantly perhaps, Christian teachers will learn from his speeches and be prodded both to produce chapel speeches of similar thrust and to teach Christianly. Parents of students in Christian schools will find out what their children are hearing in chapels, and those not yet familiar with the basics of Christian education will obtain a valuable introduction.

Don't expect to be bogged down by heavy discussion of educational philosophy — it's not a heavy booklet, and philosophy is mentioned only through example. Don't expect classic literature — these are speeches, not novellas or poetry. Expect to see very down-to-earth applications of Scripture that prod you to live your life, in its totality, to the glory of God.

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Refusing consolation

"A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more" (Jer. 31:15).

Tomorrow I have to conduct a funeral. It is one of those services I dread — for someone I've never met about whom I have only scraps of information. The one who died is a young woman, 19, named Renee. She died of pneumonia after a lifetime of disability and retardation. She has a father who has refused contact for years. Her mother died in a car accident when she was three-weeks old, and ever since, she has been passed from one caretaker to another. The only people at the service will be a couple of representatives of social services agencies whose jobs include caring for people like Renee. Even as I agreed to do this service I thought how depressing it would be.

But today I spoke with Antoinette, Renee's foster mother for just over six years. She called me because she wanted me to know who Renee had been.

Renee was "non-verbal," Antoinette told me, but she knew how to communicate using her body and making sounds. She could express anger, but she could also express great happiness. "My greatest reward was to see her smile," this foster mother said.

Throughout our conversation, this loving woman wept quietly, even as she clearly told me the little details of Renee's life. The doctors had never expected her to live this long; every year had been a miracle. And yet, her death had come suddenly. "I loved her," Antoinette concluded simply. "I loved her like my own."

I was so grateful to know that there was someone crying for Renee after all, someone who had bothered to get to know her, to communicate with her, to make her smile. There will be at least one person at Renee's funeral who is not there out of duty; one who loved this girl, who will notice that she is gone and who will miss her. In a strange way, Antoinette's grief makes Renee's death less tragic, though still painful.

Rachel weeping for her children

At the end of the happy story of the birth of Christ, as the culmination of the Epiphany journey of the magi, we find in Matthew the story of the Slaughter of the Innocents. Infuriated at having been tricked by the wise men, Herod sends to Bethlehem and orders the massacre of all children two years old and under. And so, Matthew tells us, Jeremiah's prophecy about Rachel's inconsolable weeping was fulfilled.

In a strange way, Rachel's weeping makes this tragic story bearable. How much more horrible would it have been if all the residents of Bethlehem, in prudent fear and in hope of self-preservation, had simply looked away from Herod's butchery. But no; there is a voice of "wailing and loud lamentation" which refuses to be silenced, hushed or easily consoled.

Our world is full of horrors at least as terrible as the slaughter of those children centuries ago. We are surrounded by pain, loss, war, hunger, disease, homelessness, poverty, abuse. Renee's story of neglect and abandonment is repeated countless times in cities throughout North America. In the face of all this misery it is tempting to avert our eyes and to harden our hearts. We are helpless, after all. What can we do against all this suffering?

We can weep. We can allow our hearts to be touched by the hurt of others. We can resist pretending that nothing is wrong. We, too, can refuse to be comforted.

We can refuse until one day we are comforted by the one who has borne all our griefs and carried all our sorrows, who promises to wipe every tear from our eyes. On that day I believe that those murdered infants from Bethlehem will join us in receiving comfort and in singing praise. And so will Renee.

Laura Smit is pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Clayton, N.J.

We wish you all a happy and healthy 1994!

Will you keep your appointment with April?

Vivian M. Loken

Basically, working hard is a fine idea. It can give you a marvellous sense of accomplishment and advancement. It keeps you from being bored, and you don't have time for mischief. It also occupies you when the rest of your life seems like drudgery.

A story about the philosopher George Santayana touches on the matter of balancing work and leisure. One radiant spring morning he stopped in the middle of a sentence during a lecture.

"I'm afraid," he said, "that sentence will never be finished. I have an appointment with April."

He gathered his papers together then and left the lecture theatre to go off into the country.

Now, Santayana was eccentric in many ways, and following his example to the letter might not be advisable. But the point he made is well-taken.

A lot of us are slaves to what we do. We don't know how it happened and it's not something we can cure easily. When the "breaks" don't come we are pretty sure they will if we work even harder. If opportunities *are* happening for us, wild horses would not stop us. Our work is obviously paying off.

But there's a price. Maybe we are aware of the price and we're willing to pay it. If we have made a conscious choice, at least we had that satisfaction.

Running on someone else's timetable

However, some of us workfreaks who don't know when to quit may be running on someone else's timetable that was set for us when we were still children. Somebody knew the right words to send us off and running. We started, and nothing ever really shut us down.

Russell Baker, author of *Growing Up,* talks about what I mean. "If you think I'm going to raise a good-for-nothing," his mother told him repeatedly, "you've got another think coming." The threat was intended to drive Baker into earning extra money and to excelling in school.

I know exactly what he was talking about. His mother was more recklessly verbal than my parents were, but the threat was there. His mother defined more ambitions and goals for him than my parents did for me, but the prodding was the same. Parents' or the world's ultimate measurement of you, by their standards and by the example they set, is based on how hard to work. (And Baker lived up to his mother's expectations. He has written many books, won a Pulitzer Prize and is now the television host of *Masterpiece Theatre.*)

Whatever the stimulation, the only reason good enough for robbing our leisure by overspending time in hours worked is to realize an ambition or reach a goal. Unfortunately, many of the people abusing their resources are pushed by a strong force that has never even been defined by *them.* Mechanically, they press on through every wakeful hour of every day. There is no time for rummaging around after simple satisfaction. They feel like coffee beans — in a regular grind!

Just 'being'

Can anything be salvaged out of such a crunch? A woman I knew talked about the bits of time she set aside for just "being." At the time I didn't quite understand what she was talking about, but clearly, what she said left an impression on my mind. When events in my life shifted a little so I could find some flexibility in the jam-packed moments, I explored that possibility of "just being." I was trying to find a way to keep my appointment with April.

Even supposing we have a clear idea of where we're aimed and are willing to pay the price in the interest of getting there, what then? There is some freedom in the fact that our commitment to our ambition or goal is actually renewed every day.

With the turning of every calendar date we have a clear-cut opportunity to decide if this is another day on which we grimly toe the mark and get ready for a 24-hour marathon (ready to pay the consequences), or if we have given ourselves permission for some leniency. The very fact of making a choice instead of blindly setting out on a course that's never been examined, makes the pursuit more desirable.

Scripture deals specifically with work and rest. In Genesis 2:2-3 we are told, "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made."

In his mercy and goodness, God set an example for us to follow. No mention is made of exemptions. God intended us to rest.

Missed appointment

Your "appointment with April," unlike Santayana's, may not be in the country amidst trees, grass and flowers. Who knows where yours is? But you have one, and chances are you'll miss it. One day, you may find it's too late. Take Uncle William....

Aunt Liz and Uncle William lived among the foothills of a mountain range. Below them an azure-colored, Africa-shaped lake lay like a jewel in the valley. Uncle William died one evening in his accounting office where he worked far past quitting time, as was his custom.

Aunt Liz held up well through the funeral and even through most of the sale of their household possessions later. Her composure broke completely when the auctioneer called for bids on a pair of porch rockers. "One of them is like new, just like new!" chanted the auctioneer enthusiastically. Uncle William had bought the rockers for himself and Aunt Liz the summer he added the deck with its vista of the valley. He never used his.

Uncle William missed his appointment with April.

Vivian Loken is a freelance writer who lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

PHOTO: THIS IS BRITISH COLUMBIA

Cathedral Provincial Park, British Columbia

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Anniversaries $45.00
2-column anniversaries . $90.00
Obituaries $45.00
Notes of thanks $35.00
Birthdays $40.00

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Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive

ATTENTION!

a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.,

b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is *not* acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.

c) Photographs sent by fax *are not* acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.

d) *Christian Courier* will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.

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We offer a one-year subscription for only $20.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the *Christian Courier* and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose $20.00 and the couple's correct address.

Christian Courier
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
Phone: (905) 682-8311
Fax: (905) 682-8313

Thank You

GARBUTT-VANDERLUGT:

I want to thank all my children, relatives, and friends for visits, cards, flowers, and best wishes for my 80th birthday.

I am thankful to the Lord who has blessed me graciously all these years.

Mrs. Maria D. Garbutt-Vanderlugt, 54 Mohawk Road West, #801, Hamilton, ON L9C 1V7

Births

DEGELDER:

With joy and thanks to the Lord, Rita and Peter DeGelder of Mt. Brydges and Larry and Ruth Mieras of Ann Arbour, Mich., announce the birth of their granddaughter,

ABIGAIL MARIE
(ABBY)

born on Nov. 28, 1993.
Daughter of Peter and Susan DeGelder, Grand Rapids, Mich.
Sister for Katie and new cousin for Kelly, Charlotte and Stephanie of Holland, Mich., and Alex and Evan of Grand Rapids, Mich.
Great-grandchild of Mrs. Wilma VanderStelt of Brampton, Ont., and Mrs. Grace Mieras of Grand Rapids, Mich.

VANDERWOERD (nee JANSSEN):

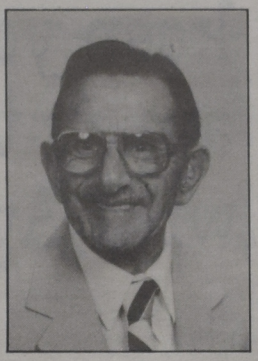
God has added to our family! Proud parents, Valerie and Jim, and excited brother, Colin, would like to announce the birth of our son and brother,

TREVOR LUKE

born on Dec. 6, 1993, at 6:24 a.m., weighing 7 pounds and 13 1/2 oz.
Trevor is the second grandchild of both Luke and Helen Janssen of Kitchener, Ont., and of Jim and Irene Vanderwoerd of Vancouver, B.C., and another great-grandchild for Oma Numan of Brampton, Ont., and Oma Zwart of Brampton, Ont.
Trevor has joined the rest of the family at 15 James Street West, Guelph, ON N1G 1E3, (519) 763-8273.

Birthdays

KARREMAN:



We praise God for His loving faithfulness to

DICK KARREMAN

for granting him to celebrate his 80th birthday on Friday, Jan. 14, 1994.
Congratulations Dick, and we wish you God's blessing and nearness in the future.
With love from Coby and the children and grandchildren.
Home address: Mr. and Mrs. D. Karreman, 10005 Bay Pines Blvd. #136, St. Petersburg, FL 33708, U.S.A.

Greetings

LIEVERDINK:

Grada Lieverdink sends her best wishes to all her friends and relatives. May 1994 bring the most precious gift: the experience of the love of God.
P.O. Box 105, Iroquois, ON K0E 1K0

Congratulations to Leen and Meta Bergwerff (Boom) on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary!

Anniversaries

Zwolle Red Deer
Holland Alberta
1944 January 6 1994

"Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits" (Ps. 103:2).

With thankfulness to God, we celebrated with joy the 50th anniversary of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents,

BERT and KLAZINA PIERIK
(nee BOUWMAN)

We thank God for His guidance and care.

With love:
Jannie & Martin Nyland
Kathleen & Chris, Bev & Ger, Stanley, Darrin
Kay & George Bowman
Brenda & George, Brent
Peter & Inez Pierik
Michael & Brandi (Aaron), Michelle
Herma & Cor Pikkert
Corinne, Kevin & Pam (fiancee), Trevor
Victor

Home address: 5531-38 Street, Red Deer, AB T4N 0X7

Peter en Marja are not IN this week!

Anniversaries

Rotterdam Brampton
1944 January 5 1994

"All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God" (2 Cor. 4:15).

With thankfulness to the Lord, we joyfully announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,

LEEN and META BERGWERFF
(BOOM)

We thank God for the countless blessings He has bestowed on you and your marriage and pray that God will continue to bless you for many more years.

With love from:
Arnold & Fran Bergwerff
Ben & Angela (Steven)
Tom & Gerda Kerkhof
Nicole, Mark and Michelle
Bill & Helen Schenk
Dwight, Trevor and Brina
Louis & Maria Bergwerff
Matthew

Best wishes only please.
Home address: 150 Royal Palm, Brampton, ON L6Z 1P8

Obituaries

The Church Council and congregation of Collingwood Chr. Ref. Church extend their sympathy, and share in the sorrow of Julie DenBok, Caleb and Adriane, Joe and Joanne, and their family in the loss of their husband, father, and son,

DAVID ADRIAN DEN BOK

resting safe in the arms of Jesus.
May the God of all comfort and peace console and strengthen them in the loss of this our brother and colleague on Council. We also thank the Lord for Dave's life, his ministry as a deacon, and for the solid faith he exhibited in Jesus Christ his Savior and Lord.

March 23, 1924 - Dec. 10, 1993

ANDREW (ANDY) RAYMOND ELGERSMA

of Lynden, Ont., died suddenly as a result of a heart attack and is now in heaven rejoicing.
He will be sadly missed by his beloved wife, Ann (nee Esser) and his nine children:
Ray & Claire Elgersma — Kitchener, Ont.
Ivan Elgersma — Edmonton, Alta.
Roger & Shirley Ainsworth — Beamsville, Ont.
George & Margaret Elgersma — Guelph, Ont.
Cathy Kowalski — Edmonton, Alta.
Fred & Mary Elgersma — Alberton, Ont.
Bill & Jeannie Elgersma — Sioux Center, Iowa
Ben & Helen DeBoer — Ancaster, Ont.
Fred & Carol Holwerda — Grand Rapids, Mich.
He was a proud and caring grandfather to 23 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He will be lovingly remembered by two brothers, seven sisters and many friends and acquaintances.
"The loving kindness of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting" (Ps. 103:17a).

"In my Father's house..." (John 14:1-4).

On Sunday, Dec. 12, 1993, while on her way to church, the Lord in His wisdom, suddenly took to himself our dearly loved daughter and sister-in-law,

MRS. ANNA VANDER WAL
(HOUTMAN)

May the Lord be very near to Melle and his family and may they receive comfort from Psalm 91.
John Vander Wal — Wyoming, Ont.
Audrey Vander Wal — Wyoming, Ont.
Stan & Evelyn Vander Wal — Goderich, Ont.
John & Dorothy Vander Wal — Camlachie, Ont.
Wilco & Donna Vander Wal — Sarnia, Ont.
Harvey & Maria Vander Wal — Camlachie, Ont.
and nieces and nephews.

Classifieds

Obituaries

On Dec. 18, 1993, the Lord took to Himself our friend, member of the Golden Age Club, and resident of the South Chatham Village, and longtime member of the Dutch Ladies Society in Chatham, Ont.,

MRS. MARTHA VAN ROOYEN

at the age of 87.

We know that she longed to go to her heavenly Father. With her husband and children and grand- and great-grandchildren we do not mourn as those who have no hope, but know that she went to her Lord and Savior.

"Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (Ps. 23:6).

On Dec. 10, 1993, the Lord called home our beloved husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather,

ALBERT ZOMER

after a short illnes at the age of 88 years.

Dearly loved husband of Roel Zomer (Wassens) and father of:

Jack (predeceased April 24, 1993) & Janice Zomer — Hornby

Ray & Carol Zomer — Mississauga

Wally & Diane Zomer — Milton

Allan & Tilly Zomer — Georgetown

Henry & Alice Zomer — Burlington

Fondly remembered by his many grandchildren and his great-grandson.

The funeral service was held on Monday Dec. 13, 1993, at the Community Chr. Ref. Church of Meadowvale, Rev. Stadt officiated.

Interment was at the Meadowvale Cemetery.

Correspondence address: 5710 8th Line R.R. #2, Milton, ON L0P 1E0

Teachers

AYLMER, Ont.: The board of **Immanuel Chr. School** is inviting applications for a **full-time administrative/teaching position** (60%-40%), beginning August 1994. Administrative experience is required. Please send application and resume to:

John KrienseLokker, chairman
Immanuel Chr. School
75 Caverly Road
Aylmer, ON
N5H 2P6

All applications must be received by **Jan. 15, 1994.**

COBOURG, Ont.: Northumberland Chr. School. We have a possible opening for a **part-time educational assistant** in the junior classroom **(Grades 3-5).** Please send resume and your letter of application, including your reasons why you would like to work at Northumberland Chr. School, to:

Henry Lise
Northumberland Chr. School
R.R. #5
Cobourg, ON K9A 4J8

Teachers

LETHBRIDGE, Alta.: Immanuel Chr. School invites applications for a **Grade 1 teaching position** commencing March 14, 1994, to the end of the term. Please direct all correspondence to:

Mr. H. Konynenbelt, Principal
802-6 Avenue North
Lethbridge, AB T1H 0S1
Phone (403) 327-4223
or (403) 328-7195
FAX (403) 328-4082

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or Bert Stam
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the Netherlands
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Personal

DECEMBER 1993

THE CONSULATE-GENERAL WOULD LIKE TO COME IN CONTACT WITH THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS:

AKKERMAN, Mrs. Aaltje, born May 29, 1931, last known address in the Netherlands: Deventer, immigrated to Canada August 18, 1980

MASEE-VAN MANEN, Everdina, born March 31, 1901 in Ede, last known address in Canada: P.O. Box 1435, Bancroft, Ontario K0L 1C0.

STARRE van der, Mr. Marinus (Michael) and Mrs. Marry, last known address in Canada: 251 Woodridge Drive S.W., Calgary, Alberta

WENTGES, Mr. C.A., born September 10, 1934, last known address in Canada: 187 Mohawk Avenue, Waterloo, Ontario N2C 2TA

CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS,
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TORONTO, ONTARIO M5G 1Z3

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Sid Vandermeulen

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Look for our Calendar of Events on page 18...

Miscellaneous

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The Canadian Red Cross Society

Miscellaneous

Church news

Christian Reformed Church

Address change

Second CRC, Abbotsford, B.C., has discontinued its post office box. Mail may now be sent directly to the church at: 34631 Old Clayburn Road, Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 4H5.

Change in worship time

The second worship service of the Ingersoll, Ont., CRC has been changed to 3 p.m. from 7 p.m. as of Jan. 2, 1994.

Miscellaneous

We love early birds!

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Our Circulation Manager is at her job every day trying to keep our subscriptions up to date. We spend thousands of dollars each year in postage sending out renewal notices, reminders, etc. To top it off, Canada Post charges us an extra fee for using the handy business-reply envelopes we make available. **This means that in order to get a subscription renewed we have to pay close to $1.00 in postage alone!**

The computer label on your *Christian Courier* copy shows the month in which your subscription is due. If your label shows that your subscription is due two or three months from now, *kindly consider sending us the renewal fee ahead of time.* This way, you will be assured that C.C. will be coming to you regularly, as well as saving us time and postage expenses!

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P.S. If possible, glue your label in this space, or enclose it.

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Classifieds

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DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

Reporting to the Executive Director of Ministries
Christian Reformed Church in North America

The CRCNA is seeking a qualified individual who will provide financial managerial leadership to the denominational ministries and services committees and serve as financial resource to the Board of Trustees over all financial policies and objectives.

A Bachelor's degree in Finance and Accounting is required; Master's degree or CPA preferred. Demonstrated experience in handling business and financial affairs is essential.

A detailed position description is available upon request. Letters of interest by qualified persons, along with a resume, should be sent by **January 21, 1994** to:

Director of Finance Search Committee
2850 Kalamazoo Ave. S.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49560
Phone: 616-246-0832
FAX: 616-246-0834

Miscellaneous

REINDERS architecture

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St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

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Thank you.
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Use the classifieds and save money

Calendar

Jan. 8 "Breakfast of Champions," an in-depth, faith-stirring, practical Bible teaching experience conducted by Gerrit Verstraete. From 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Streetsville Physiotherapy, 190 Queen St. S., **Mississauga**, Ont. To register ($15), call (905) 567-8373 or 826-7404.

Jan. 16 Dutch worship service led by Rev. John G. Klomps, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster**, Ont.

Jan. 21-23 Annual "Student/Young Adult Winter Retreat" at **Camp Pioneer** (Muskoka), Ont. Theme: "University of Jesus." Info.: Freda Heida (519) 433-9798, or Marvin Talsma (519) 850-0583.

Jan. 24 The annual "Christianity & Culture" lecture, 8 p.m., Brock University, **St. Catharines**, Ont. Speaker: *The Banner* editor Rev. John Suk on "The language of white supremacist religion." For info. call Brock CRC chaplain Rev. Nick Overduin at (905) 688-5550, ext. 3134, or his home (905) 688-1280.

Poetry

Poetry by Harry der Nederlanden

Saturday Night Visit

The kids are making debris
of the other rooms while
we trade loud insults
and mild vulgarities
across the kitchen table
and grimace over the bargain
wine you brought to share
with us. A mad scramble
for the last piece of spiced
Gouda scatters peanuts
all over the unswept floor.

The evening's schedule —
all the unfinished odds
and ends of a working day —
remain happily unfinished.
We consummate our dissoluteness
by cheating brazenly at cards.
Our self-imposed curfews
are transgressed again and
again until even the kids
begin to sense the strangeness
of the hour. The goblets of
the lamp cast haloes of rippled
light around the room, cutting
off the corners, drawing us
into a circle, a molecule
composed of mystic bonds.

Time swings aimlessly to
and fro like the lamp,
describing a space of gross
being purged of all com-
pulsion. We slouch into
silence luxuriating in
each other's simple presence.
The city and its noises sink
away into the obscure
preparations of the night.
One by one the children enter
unobtrusively, mute, gazing
quizzically from a day
already gone and doubting
the orderly appearance of the next.

The open windows let in
the moan of city streets
stretching out for the night
and the tired mumble of the earth
grumbling about its endless
revolutions. God lets drop
quietly one shoe and then
another. Sighing, he puts
his weary feet up on the table.
One can't stand on ceremony
all the time. His eyes close.
He blends into the silence.

The next morning the smell
of his feet still lingers
in the room, a very mundane
smell, like that of country
mornings when the early fog
rises redolent with earth.
But it's Sunday; hurriedly
we hide the signs of dissolution
and spray air freshner around
the room lest we offend
the noses of our Sunday guests.

Notes:

The Saturday night camaraderie is often seen as a secular, dissolute carnival before the pious duties on Sunday. Call it a vulgar, populist version of "whenever 2 or 3... there I am." Sometimes one may discover communion not by disciplined pursuit but by relaxing into it.

Coming

I often think of the set pieces of liturgy as certain words which people have successfully addressed to God without getting killed. In the high churches they saunter like Mohawks along a strand of scaffolding who have long since forgotten their danger. If God were to blast such a service to bits, the congregation would be, I believe, genuinely shocked. But in the low churches you expect it any minute. This is the beginning of wisdom. (Annie Dillard)

Tactless like Jehovah's Witnesses
banging on your door 8 a.m.
Saturday and it's 10 below
violating all our sanctities
of ease

so is the coming

fascist cops splintering
locks
smashing open doors
probing fingers touching
turning inside-out all
private spaces

so is the coming

one cannot of course
tolerate such tactless
barbarities in a city
ruled by law of sensitivity
one must make schedules,
appointments, litanies

to announce the coming

establish curfews contain
the riff-raff
sanitize the streets
expel the foreign shadow
with lights burning every
bush to ornament

to know the coming

post blond doormen at
every point of entry
to check credentials
no unauthorized incursions
or miraculous interventions
beyond this point

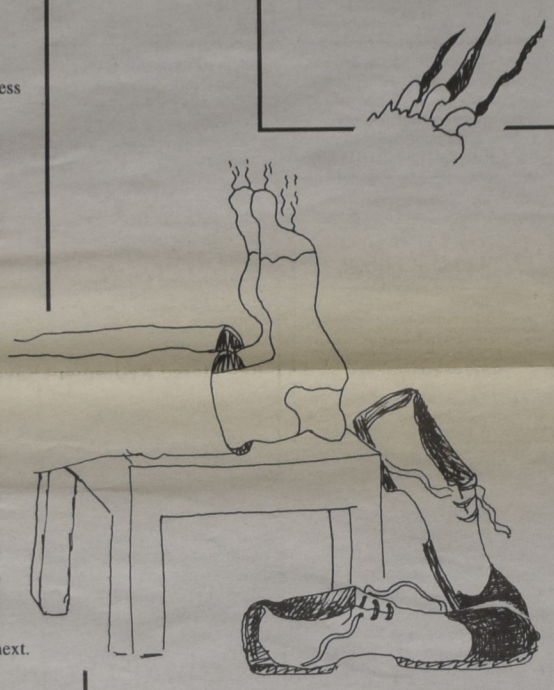
to regulate the coming
and going.

good... he's gone.

Notes:

For a Christian all forms of order and structure are ways of (re)presenting the reconciling work of Christ. Yet, that ordering always threatens to render him superfluous.

Christ the Tiger



Leap your long
Lithe deathly leap
Dropping swift
Into our sleep

Stretch your coiled
Lethal claws
Make a grave
Of your jagged jaws

Drive them in
Like ten-inch nails
Rip my flesh
Spill my entrails

Don't be gentle, Christ,
Be cruel
Rend this sleep-
Enswaddled fool

Let me breathe
Your tiger-breath
Inflate my soul
In crush of death

Flood my veins
With tiger-blood
Blend my roar
With the roaring flood

Up from the ground
Bid me rise
Blazing green
Like tiger eyes.

Notes:

With apologies to Wm. Blake and the writer of the book* Christ the Tiger.** ***I never read the book but the title stuck in my mind. Too much of contemporary Christianity lulls the critical mind and seeks to acclimate us to empty ways of life. Those who do have a Christ who wields a sword, tend to turn that sword against others. This is a poem about self-mortification, not a central theme in evangelical or Reformed circles.

Lunch hour can stay Bible-study hour

Ontario school boards say Christian clubs 'not indoctrinational'

Excerpted from *Connection*

NORWICH, Ont. — Public school students in Oxford and Norfolk counties can continue to gather for Bible study during lunch hour on school property in the new year.

Public school boards in each county faced complaints late last year from a parent about the clubs, sponsored by the Christian Service Centers.

The Oxford County Board of Education discussed a complaint from Jamie Dickson, parent of a child in the North Norwich Public School last November.

Dickson claimed that his daughter's rights were being violated because the Key Clubs were being held in contravention of Ministry of Education policy. Ministry regulations stipulate that such activities may take place on school property only if they are held before or after the school day.

> ***"Key Club program 'supports the schools' initiatives in dealing with violence'"***

At present, 17 of Oxford's 36 elementary schools offer the Key Club program at noon because most of their students are bused to school and cannot come in before or stay after the school day.

Stan Balint, Christian Service Centers president, pointed out that Ministry regulations and common school practice indicate that the lunch break should not be considered instructional time. He also pointed out that the Key Club program was voluntary and non-coercive.

Balint drafted his presentation with some assistance from Gerald Vandezande, public policy co-ordinator with the Coalition for Religious Freedom in Education.

Vandezande stressed that the Key Club program offers voluntary religious education rather than mandatory indoctrinal instruction. The latter was declared unconstitutional by the Ontario Appeal Court in the *Elgin County* decision.

The Oxford board responded to Balint's presentation in a letter to a ministry official. The letter states that "the board has decided to make no changes in its present practices because the activity in question...is voluntary in nature, is not indoctrinational, occurs during a mandatory 40-minute lunch break for teachers [and] does not infringe upon the rights of parents who wish no involvement at the present time."

The letter also noted that the Key Club program "supports the schools' initiatives in dealing with violence, and carries on a 40-year tradition in Oxford County."

The Norfolk Board of Education made a similar positive response to the complaint of a parent of a student at Port Dover Public School in November.

Video gambling like cocaine addiction

Anne Hutten

KENTVILLE, N.S. — Two gambling addiction counsellors at the Crosbie Centre, a Kentville, N.S., treatment facility for those with addiction problems, have compared the urge to play video gambling machines to cocaine use.

Community health worker Richard Stevens told the *Kentville Advertiser* that addicts forget everything that matters to them once they begin to play the machines. The only other place he has seen such total disregard for reason is with crack cocaine addicts, he noted.

In response to widespread concern over the abuse of video gambling machines at Nova Scotia's corner stores, the provincial government restricted them to places where liquor is served. This has only shifted the location, according to Eric Patton, a clinical therapist at the Crosbie Centre.

Pathological gamblers continue their practice even though they know it has a deleterious effect on their lives, said Patton. They become preoccupied with gambling, thinking and dreaming about it much of the time; their efforts to stop are unsuccessful; they gamble larger sums of money for longer periods of time; they become irritable when not gambling; they continually lose money and try to gain back the losses through more gambling.

Patton estimates the social cost of each gambling addict at $56,000.

Addicts may cash in RRSPs, borrow to the limit on credit cards, and even commit theft to obtain the necessary cash. Those who show up at the centre are "usually very distressed," while some are suicidal, says Patton.

With files from the Kentville Advertiser

Calvin College becomes 'sister school' to Russian university

Robert VanderVennen
With files from Phil de Haan

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Calvin College has signed an agreement to become a "sister school" to the Peoples' Friendship University in Moscow. The Russian university was founded in 1960 to train foreign students and send them back home as agents of world socialism.

The agreement, signed recently in Grand Rapids with two representatives of the Russian university, calls for regular exchanges of faculty and administrators, information on teaching methods and research, and an exchange of scholarly publications.

The academic institutions will also exchange students, with Calvin accepting Russian students who qualify academically and score high enough on an English proficiency test.

This visit to Grand Rapids and the new agreement follow a 12-day trip to Moscow at the university's invitation by Calvin's academic dean Frank Roberts and Calvin alumni Milt and John Kuyers. Roberts spoke at the university about the role of the Protestant Reformation in the development of capitalism, democracy and social reform. The Kuyers lectured to business students and faculty on the free market system. Roberts said, "We discovered deep political pessimism about the future of democrary in Russia."

Calvin is one of 10 members of the Coalition of Christian Colleges that will participate in a "Semester in Russia" program starting in January, 1994.

News Digest

Edited by Irene Bom

Herd of hippos destroying crops

YAOUNDE, Cameroon — A herd of 100 hippos is destroying crops in northern Cameroon and has killed two women in a hunting party chasing them.

The marauding herd has for weeks been terrorizing the rich farming community around Lake Guere, near the border with Chad, state radio reported late last month.

In daily raids from the lake, they have uprooted and destroyed dozens of fields of millet and sorghum.

On Wednesday, hunters in canoes attacked the hippos with spears and arrows, the radio said. One of many calves in the herd overturned a canoe and attacked two women who fell out and drowned.

Chicken carcasses ease arthritis

BOSTON, Mass. — Rheumatoid arthritis sufferers may benefit from a new breakthrough, reports the *Daily Telegraph*.

Conventional treatment uses steroid drugs to treat the disease in which the immune system attacks proteins in joint cartilage. Patients who were fed collagen produced from chicken carcasses reported a reduction in joint swelling and pain. The results suggest the collagen fools the immune system so that it does not attack collagen in the body.

Nova Scotia AIDS strategy 'vague'

HALIFAX — The Nova Scotia government issued its AIDS strategy more than ten years after the disease began affecting citizens of this province, according to CC correspondent Anne Hutten.

In a response statement the coalition of Nova Scotia AIDS community groups criticized the text as "simply a series of vague commitments" with no funding or budget provided.